

Widely-Held Expectations in Physical Development

Birth–3 years	3–5 years	5–7 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May experience a period of extremely rapid growth ▪ Develop the ability to move about and to manipulate objects to the best of their ability ▪ Begin to develop vision following slowly moving objects with their eyes ▪ Begin to develop hand-eye coordination—reaching, grasping, objects, feeding, dressing ▪ Begin to recognize concepts of place and direction—up, down, in ▪ Begin to move about—sit, stand, crawl, walk, climb stairs, walk backwards—to the best of their ability ▪ Are beginning to identify their own body parts, often through nursery rhymes and games ▪ Are unaware of physical strength and limitations so may attempt activities that could be difficult or dangerous ▪ May often change activities ▪ Will move about at own pace, always near a trusted adult ▪ Are likely to play alone or beside another ▪ Begin to play games like peek-a-boo and hide-and-seek 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are experiencing a period of rapid growth ▪ Have a slower rate of small muscle development (hands) than growth and coordination of large muscles (legs) ▪ Are usually naturally far-sighted ▪ Continue to develop hand-eye coordination and a preference for left or right handedness ▪ Begin to understand and use concepts of place and direction—up, down, under, beside ▪ Are developing the ability to climb, balance, run, gallop, jump, push and pull, and take stairs one at a time ▪ Are beginning to identify body parts and words used in movement—jump, save, hop ▪ Seem unaware of their own physical strengths and limitations and may try potentially difficult or dangerous activities ▪ May change activities often, although sometimes concentrate on one thing for a long time if interested ▪ Are beginning to take part in group situations, but still play side-by-side rather than “with” others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May or may not experience a slower rate of physical growth. Large muscles (legs and arms) may be more developed than small muscles (hands and feet) ▪ May increase fine motor skills (handling writing tools, using scissors) ▪ Usually continue to show far-sightedness ▪ Continue to develop hand-eye coordination. A preference for left or right-handedness may still be developing. ▪ Continue to develop an understanding of direction and place although may confuse right and left, up and down when playing games ▪ Continue to develop climbing, balancing, running, galloping, and jumping abilities. May have trouble skipping. ▪ Are growing in their ability to know what and where their body parts are, and how they can be moved and coordinated ▪ Continue vigorous activity, tiring easily, recovering quickly ▪ Tire from sitting rather than running ▪ Develop an awareness of safety with guidance ▪ Usually show enthusiasm for most physical activities and are sometimes called noisy or aggressive ▪ Are developing the ability to take part in small group games, and usually begin to play in groups of children of the same sex

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7–9 years	9–11 years	11–13 years
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Continue to refine fine motor development and may have slower rate of physical growth ▪ May experience some visual difficulties (eye testing and corrective lenses) ▪ Are continuing to develop hand-eye coordination, and may accomplish more complex tasks ▪ Are developing ability to coordinate left and right sides by showing a preference for batting, kicking, or throwing with one side or the other ▪ Are gradually increasing in speed and accuracy during running, climbing, throwing, kicking, and catching activities ▪ Are continuing to understand body parts and uses ▪ Are beginning to understand basic ideas of nutrition ▪ May show more daring, exploring behavior that could lead to accidents ▪ Show times of high energy; become easily tired ▪ Continue to develop awareness of safety with guidance ▪ Continue to show enthusiasm for most physical activities ▪ May be interested in playing in groups although the group and the activity probably change often 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May experience a spurt of growth before puberty ▪ May experience some visual difficulties (eye testing and corrective lenses) ▪ Are continuing to develop hand-eye coordination, and skill level for physical activities may depend on this increase in coordination ▪ Are continuing to develop ability to use either the right side or left side for batting, kicking, or throwing ▪ Show increased coordination, but growth spurts may begin to interfere ▪ Develop the ability to hit a ball (softball bat, tennis racquet, golf club) ▪ Are developing a more sophisticated understanding of body parts and function as well as basic ideas of nutrition and growth ▪ Are beginning to develop the ability to pace themselves during high energy activities ▪ Understand safety rules but sometimes take risks ▪ May begin to show a preference for some physical activities over others ▪ May appear to enjoy more complex group games and simple sports ▪ May show a strong sense of loyalty to a group or team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May experience rapid and uneven growth but this occurs at different rates for individual children; arms and legs may grow rapidly. ▪ May continue to experience changes to eyesight ▪ Continue to develop and refine hand-eye skills and integrate them with whole body efforts in sports and games ▪ Continue to refine right/left preference, and may show increasing strength with one hand/arm/foot ▪ May show periods of relatively poor coordination and awkwardness; may show some poor posture because of rapid growth ▪ May continue to develop more sophisticated and understanding of body parts and functions and begin to get the idea of a simple body system ▪ Continue to enjoy sports and group games ▪ Learn more complex body movements ▪ Continue to develop the ability to pace themselves during high energy activities ▪ Understand safety rules but sometimes takes risks ▪ Often vary between the sexes in their interest in physical activities ▪ Continue to play in same-sex groups, often engage in more formal team activities, and continue to show great loyalty to group or team